



**Regular Board Meeting**

**February 27, 2025**

**Donzella Administration Building – 1275 Lakeside Avenue E, Cleveland, OH 44114**

**and broadcasted live via Zoom – 5:30 pm**

**1. Opening**

**A. Convene**

The organizational meeting was called to order by President, Steve Scheidt at 5:29pm.

**B. Roll Call**

Allison Frazier, Lisa Hunt, Mozelle Jackson, Alaina McCruel, Steve Scheidt, Cynthia Schulz, Sara Steimle

**2. Minutes**

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the organizational meeting of the Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities held January 23, 2025, a copy of which is made a part of the permanent record of this meeting, be accepted as directed by the President, without objection, and approved as published.

Motion by Mozelle Jackson, second by Cynthia Schulz.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Aye: Allison Frazier, Lisa Hunt, Mozelle Jackson, Alaina McCruel, Steve Scheidt, Cynthia Schulz, Sara Steimle

**3. Swear in New Appointed Member**

Swear in Sara Steimle:

Do you, Sara Steimle, solemnly swear that you will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of Ohio; and that you will faithfully and impartially discharge your duties as a member of the Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities to the best of your ability, and in accordance with the laws and rules and regulations of the Board now in effect and hereafter to be enacted, during your continuance in said office, and until your successor is appointed?

Sara Steimle response: "I do"

**4. Donations**

RESOLVED, that the Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities gratefully accepts five equipment donations of unspecified value to the OT/PT Lending Library.

Motion by Lisa Hunt, second by Mozelle Jackson.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Aye: Allison Frazier, Lisa Hunt, Mozelle Jackson, Alaina McCruel, Steve Scheidt, Cynthia Schulz, Sara Steimle

## **5. Financial Statements**

RESOLVED, that the Operating Fund Statement and the Statements of Revenue and Expenditures - Planned and Actual for the year-to-date period ending January 31, 2025, be accepted and filed for audit; the payment of vouchers for the period January 1, 2025 to January 31, 2025 be ratified; and that all statements and voucher summaries are made a part of the permanent record of this meeting.

Motion by Cynthia Schulz, second by Steve Scheidt.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Aye: Allison Frazier, Lisa Hunt, Mozelle Jackson, Alaina McCruel, Steve Scheidt, Cynthia Schulz, Sara Steimle

Superintendent Gibbs gave a summary of the financial statements noting significant variances. We opened the month with a cash balance of \$145,205,630. Our total revenues were \$1,231,007, and our expenditures were \$27,185,385 for a cash balance ending of \$119,251,252.

Total revenue is overbudget by 11% for the month. In January we typically find that our budget numbers are a little off--some unplanned items hit in January and our expenditures might be lower than planned. For example, we will see some variance in the OOD Vocation Rehab Contract due to a change in the way the state is paying this bill, but at the end of the year we will have the same overall budget. We also received our last payment for 2024 in 2025 for the Employee Health Insurance Reimbursement. Another timing issue is reflected in Community Partner Reimbursements—we expected payment for our Fenders programs to begin in February, but it was received in January.

Our overall expenditures ended up 3% underbudget. More timing issues are reflected in Other Locally Funded Contracts expenditures due to bills for interpreter services hitting in December. We also have some invoices for Buildings & Grounds Contracts & Services that will hit in February. In Staffing expenditures we had some 2024 expenses hit early because of the close of the County fiscal year.

## **6. Announcements**

President, Steve Scheidt turned the meeting over to Superintendent, Dr. Amber Gibbs who gave the following announcements:

- On February 13<sup>th</sup> Superintendent Gibbs and new Board member Sara Steimle were featured on Ideastream's "Sound of Ideas" program. They were interviewed alongside Stark County's newest Board member, Crystal Waters, where they all discussed the importance of having representation by people with DD on County Boards.
- On February 14<sup>th</sup> Cuyahoga DD launched our Voter Voice Campaign to Protect Medicaid. About 1,000 people reached out to leave 3,000 message for their elected representatives about the cuts to Medicaid and other issues that are important to them. In using this platform for the first time we have achieved one of our Strategic Plan goals.
- On February 18<sup>th</sup> News 5 Cleveland covered the Voter Voice Campaign in a segment featuring Superintendent Gibbs and Good Life Ambassador Breanna Sprenger. They discussed the impact of potential Medicaid cuts on services for people with DD. The segment has been broadcast in 16 markets in 13 different states.

- On February 24<sup>th</sup>, the Cleveland Monsters' Sensory Friendly Night occurred and was well received. We gave away 173 free tickets to individuals we serve and their families. Rebecca Kimble, a File Clerk at our Lakeside building, was given the honor of performing the game's puck drop. Cuyahoga DD representatives were on hand to discuss our services and to promote our universal changing table. Good Life Ambassador Grace Blatt trained staff at Rocket Arena on working with people with sensory needs or disabilities.
- On March 1<sup>st</sup> our team is hosting an Employment Collaborative Hiring Event. This event will focus on summer youth/direct support provider field-related positions. Feel free to share this information with anyone who might benefit from it.
- Please save the date for Cuyahoga DD's Hall of Fame event on March 20<sup>th</sup>. We will be inducting Kelly Petty and Steve Licciardi at the event.
- On March 28<sup>th</sup> the Cuyahoga County Rockets face off against the Cuyahoga DD Sharks for our annual Hoops for Hunger Basketball Game event to benefit Harvest for Hunger. The game will be held in the gym at the Greed Road Center. Food and concessions will be available for purchase. A great time is guaranteed. Proceeds for the event will be split between the Cuyahoga Count Rockets and Harvest for Hunger.
- Board member Cynthia Schulz was recognized for becoming a published author. Her new book is called "Shine On: Raising Our Kids with Disabilities to Lead Bright, Happy Lives." According to Cynthia it is a book created with parents raising children with disabilities in mind, and it is a collection of stories from a hundred families who are doing it well. Congratulations, Cynthia!

Superintendent, Amber Gibbs turned the meeting over to Lynn Johnson, from our Public Information and Communications Department, who gave the following announcements about DD Awareness Month:

- March 1<sup>st</sup> marks the start of DD Awareness Month and Cuyahoga DD will be sponsoring and supporting events throughout the month.
- We are partnering with K&D to light up the Terminal Tower in plumberry on the night of Wednesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>.
- A group representing Cuyahoga DD will participate in the annual, statewide DD Advocacy Day in Columbus on Tuesday, March 4<sup>th</sup>.
- Cuyahoga DD's biannual Hall of Fame event will take place on March 20<sup>th</sup> and will be held at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo. The event will also recognize the opening of the sensory space, as well as the installation of two universal changing tables.
- We will also be partnering with Cleveland Metroparks Zoo in a joint media outreach campaign about the new sensory room ("Calming Cove") and the universal changing tables.
- For a third year we have partnered with *Cleveland Magazine* on a 4-page insert which will feature the CSU Rise program and our work to increase the number of universal changing tables in Cuyahoga County.
- Written profiles on a few people we serve will appear in the *Parma Observer*, *East Side Sun Newspapers* and *Cleveland Plain Press*, among other publications.
- A comprehensive advertising campaign has been developed which reaches our constituents via tv, billboards, transit, radio, digital and print media. Our radio ads will be broadcast in English and Spanish. The campaign is estimated to create 7,884,989 impressions with a cost-per-impression of less than one cent.
- Superintendent Gibbs commented that reaching people in the community who are not aware of Cuyahoga DD fulfills one of our Strategic Plan goals. Lynn added that many of the magazines and newspapers that we are reaching out to focus on people in ZIP codes of underserved communities. We hope to get our information into their mailboxes and in front of their eyes.

## 7. Status Reports

Superintendent Gibbs had no comments.

## **8. New Business**

### **A. Consumer Support Services Respite Contract**

RESOLVED, that the Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities approves hereby and authorizes the Superintendent to enter into a renewal contract with Consumer Support Services of Independence, Ohio to provide respite services in one Cuyahoga DD-owned home for the period April 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025 for a sum not to exceed \$37,500; and,  
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Superintendent is authorized hereby to take any and all actions necessary to carry out these transactions.

Motion by Steve Scheidt, second by Mozelle Jackson.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Aye: Allison Frazier, Lisa Hunt, Mozelle Jackson, Alaina McCruel, Steve Scheidt, Cynthia Schulz, Sara Steimle

Superintendent Gibbs explained that this is one of three different respite contracts being brought forward, each with a different provider. Cynthia Schulz asked if we were happy with the services provided by Consumer Support Services. Superintendent Gibbs replied in the affirmative.

### **B. DD West Respite Contract**

RESOLVED, that the Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities approves hereby and authorizes the Superintendent to approve an agreement with D.D. West Company to provide respite services in a Cuyahoga DD - owned home effective April 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025, for a total cost not to exceed \$1,312,500; and,  
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Superintendent is authorized hereby to take any and all actions necessary to carry out these transactions.

Motion by Alaina McCruel, second by Cynthia Schulz.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Aye: Allison Frazier, Lisa Hunt, Mozelle Jackson, Alaina McCruel, Steve Scheidt, Cynthia Schulz, Sara Steimle

Superintendent Gibbs explained that this is a home for four children (and filled all the time) almost all of whom don't have waiver funding. These are also intense cases that come to us through Department of Children and Families Services or Juvenile Justice to serve the children.

### **C. Tahgis Imports, Inc. Respite Contract**

RESOLVED, that the Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities approves hereby and authorizes the Superintendent to approve an agreement with Tahgis Imports Incorporated to provide respite services in two Cuyahoga DD-owned homes effective April 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025, for a total cost not to exceed \$375,000; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Superintendent is authorized hereby to take any and all actions necessary to carry out these transactions.

Motion by Alaina McCruel, second by Steve Scheidt.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Aye: Allison Frazier, Lisa Hunt, Mozelle Jackson, Alaina McCruel, Steve Scheidt, Cynthia Schulz, Sara Steimle

Superintendent Gibbs explained that these two homes mostly serve adults, some who are on waivers, but not all.

#### **D. Agreement with Cornucopia Inc.**

RESOLVED, that the Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities approves hereby and authorizes the Superintendent to enter into a contract with Cornucopia Inc., of Euclid, Ohio for the period March 1, 2025 through February 28, 2030 to provide pass-through funds for housing purchases for a sum not to exceed \$404,880 in 2025; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Superintendent is authorized hereby to take any and all actions necessary to carry out these transactions, so moved.

Motion by Lisa Hunt, second by Mozelle Jackson.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Aye: Allison Frazier, Lisa Hunt, Mozelle Jackson, Alaina McCruel, Steve Scheidt, Cynthia Schulz, Sara Steimle

Superintendent Gibbs provided the context that Cuyahoga DD owns a number of licensed homes and private providers run the homes as part of a long-standing agreement. One such place is an 8-bed, 2-story home that has been in our system for many years. Help Foundation is looking to purchase two smaller homes, that will be unlicensed, to house those tenants. Cornucopia Inc. is their housing corporation. The money we get from the State will be passed through to Cornucopia Inc.

#### **9. Comments from the Floor**

Jimmy Lowe, a Community Inclusion Specialist for Cuyahoga DD, spoke on the topic of his journey of working with people with DD, which included his 28 ½ years employment with Cuyahoga DD. He also spoke on the topic of his appreciation of Cuyahoga DD and the great things we do for the DD community. He also congratulated Sara Steimle on her new role as Board member.

Dontez Taylor, a member of Cuyahoga DD's community who spoke on his advocacy work and offered "kudos" to his Support Administrator for helping him achieve what he's been trying to achieve in the community. He also stated that he is going to run for City Council. He said, "I'm ready to go to another level and show them that people with disabilities can go into Council and do what a regular person can do, they just have to do it a different way." He also spoke about the difficulties of getting bus passes to the DD community.

Kristin Kavran, a Support Administrator for Cuyahoga DD, spoke on the topic of ongoing contract negotiations between SEIU and Cuyahoga DD. She asked the Board to look at the allocation of raises to avert a potential strike by the Support Administrators.

Stacy Berkowitz, an Eligibility Support Administrator at Cuyahoga DD spoke as a follow-up to her comments made at the Board meeting on November 21, 2024, on the topic of the scope and importance of her position. She also spoke on her decision to leave Cuyahoga DD and advocated for change for her coworkers.

Ida Kuczinski, a previous employee of Cuyahoga DD, spoke about her 26 years here. She was a Support Administrator for eight years and discussed the frustrations of that position which led to her leaving Cuyahoga DD. She also advocated for better compensation for her former colleagues.

#### **10. Adjournment**

RESOLVED, that the Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities hereby adjourns to Executive Session for the purpose of considering the disposition of public property; and to prepare and review collective bargaining strategy.

Motion by Steve Scheidt, second by Mozelle Jackson.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Aye: Allison Frazier, Lisa Hunt, Mozelle Jackson, Alaina McCruel, Steve Scheidt, Cynthia Schulz, Sara Steimle

Time adjourned: 6:25pm

#### **11. Reconvene**

##### **A. Roll Call**

Members present: Allison Frazier, Lisa Hunt, Mozelle Jackson, Alaina McCruel, Steve Scheidt, Cynthia Schulz, Sara Steimle

Time reconvened: 7:27pm

#### **12. Adjournment**

RESOLVED, that the Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities hereby adjourns.

Motion by Lisa Hunt, second by Alaina McCruel.

Final Resolution: Motion Approved

Aye: Allison Frazier, Lisa Hunt, Mozelle Jackson, Alaina McCruel, Steve Scheidt, Cynthia Schulz, Sara Steimle

Time adjourned: 7:27pm

**Next Meeting** – March 27, 2025 at 5:30 pm, Donzella Administration Building, 1275 Lakeside Ave E, Cleveland, OH 44114 and broadcast via Zoom. Zoom link will be shared on the Cuyahoga DD website at [cuyahogadd.org](http://cuyahogadd.org) at least three days prior to the meeting.

Certified by:

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Stephen Scheidt, President

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Mozelle Jackson, Secretary